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The Director of Central Intelligence

Washington, D.C. 20505

National Intelligence Council

NIC NO. 00515-86

30 January 1986

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chairman, National Intelligence Council

FROM: George Kolt
National Intelligence Officer for Europe

SUBJECT: Requested Discussion Item on Portuguese Elections
for Meeting with Undersecretary of State,
31 January 1986

- Soares, unexpected survival in the first round of the presidential election has been followed by surprising endorsements of his candidacy in the second round by Zenha (outright support), by Pintasilgo (implicit support) and by Communist leader Cunhal ("the lesser of two evils").
- Mathematically these endorsements suggest Soares could win: In the first round Freitas got 46 percent and the three Leftist candidates together 52 percent (Soares 25 percent, Zenha 20 percent, and Pintasilgo 7 percent).
- But politics is not mathematics. The prospects of the two candidates hinge on a number of questions to which neither we nor anyone else have answers:
 - Did a number of rightist voters support Soares in the first round in order to block the far-left and, if so, will they now go back to Freitas? Conversely could some of Freitas's supporters in the first round be relieved by the defeat of the far left and now vote for the centrist leftist Soares?
 - How will the Communist rank-and-file react to the back-to-back admonitions of their leadership to vote for erstwhile archfoes? Cunhal seems aware of this danger and has called an extraordinary congress of the party for this coming Sunday to confirm the Central Committee decision.

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- What will Eanes do now and does it matter? In the last parliamentary elections the PRD and the Communists got a total of 34 percent of the vote, but their presidential candidate got only 20 percent. Is the PRD turning out to be a flash in the pan?
- All in all Freitas remains the favorite . . . but Soares has shown once again how great a campaigner he is and Freitas as well as Prime Minister Cavaco Silva must be concerned.
- In larger political terms, the only clear conclusion that can be drawn after the first round is that the feared leftward lurch of Portugal did not occur.
- But the political contest of wills will not end with the election of a president on 16 February:
 - The combination of Freitas's candidacy and the political goal of Cavaco Silva to create a right-center majority will increase polarization.
 - It will be hard for anyone to recreate the kind of stable majority that Soares put together during the last two years.
 - Another parliamentary election is likely this year, but even it may not clarify the political situation.
 - The shift of Portugal from an American-oriented diplomacy to a more independent and European-oriented approach will continue as all politicians are critical of Soares' alleged sacrifice of Portuguese interests to Washington and as Portugal is now a member of the EC.



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